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ABSTRACT

The general purpose of this descriptive normative survey is to discover what alternative educational programs are being provided in secondary schools in Cook County and to what extent they are attended. The general hypothesis is that relatively few alternative education programs are provided and those that are, are either the traditional, well-established vocational varieties, or those that lend themselves to close relationship with the regular academic program. The criterion data needed to test the hypothesis in this survey are basically the responses of secondary school administrators to the survey as to what alternatives were given in the form of the questionnaire sent to all Cook County suburban high school district superintendents. There are 27 secondary school districts and one unit district in suburban Cook County. A total enrollment of 159,976 students are enrolled in the 1973-74 school year in 68 high school buildings. The Department of Research of the Educational Service Region of Cook County submitted a survey to all Cook County suburban high school districts requesting detailed information on the number of students and teachers involved in alternative education programs and on the type of programs offered. Although the results of the survey do sound promising, far more is needed to provide alternatives and options beyond the traditional school setting. Programs for students who are potential dropouts are still rather limited. (Author/JM)

RESEARCH REPORT

ED 099453

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1973-1974

#3202

A SERVICE OF
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION
OF COOK COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the form and availability of alternative education programs in the Cook County public secondary schools. The study is based on an extensive survey of alternative education and career oriented programs offered to a diverse population of secondary students in Cook County suburban schools. The study describes, analyzes and interprets the results of this survey in order to justify alternative programs for students whose needs are not filled by the traditional school environment.

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INTRODUCTION

At the December 1972 Truancy hearings held by the Educational Service Region of Cook County, it was determined that the juveniles out of school in Cook County were, for the most part, not enrolled in any alternative educational programs in their schools.

Alternative Education can be defined as learning experiences that are adapted to the needs of the student through individualized instruction to attack the problems of excessive absence through students' lack of interest and motivation. There is no one type of ideal program, but instead it can be any feasible substantive alternative program for young people who find it difficult to function in traditional classrooms. Alternative education can be any special program that fits the specific needs of students.

The emphasis of alternative education programs is often on career training or work study, but generally they are simply flexible programs fitting every student's needs and providing emotional support as well as academic and work training.

The general goal is to serve student interests and needs by providing a greater variety of learning opportunities and options inside the framework of the public schools. Since all students do not learn best in the same environment and since all students do not have the same interests and needs, it is best to provide opportunities for various educational alternative experiences.

The mandated reporting system on students removed from school attendance rolls, provides educators with information that can serve as the basis for research on the feasibility of alternative education programs that can help make the educational experience of students more pertinent and relevant. The holding power of a school is an indication of its effectiveness and the dropout rates are consequently the result of a less than successful educational program.

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

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ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SURVEY

A. Purposes of the Survey

The general purpose of this descriptive normative survey is to discover what alternative educational programs are being provided in secondary schools in Cook County and to what extent they are attended.

This general purpose includes several specific purposes which gives depth and show relationships for the data. The first such purpose is: What are the types of alternative programs provided most in the secondary schools in suburban Cook County?

The second such purpose is what career-oriented types of programs are a part of regular educational programs in Cook County suburban secondary schools?

The third such purpose is what types of alternative programs are provided in suburban Cook County secondary schools for expelled students? For pregnant students? During the day? During the evening?

B. Hypotheses

Hypothesizing findings of this survey is based on the rather limited knowledge provided by the results of the survey.

The general hypothesis is that relatively few alternative education programs are provided and those that are, are either the traditional, well-established vocational varieties, or those that lend themselves to close relationship with the regular academic program.

C. Criterion Data

The criterion data needed to answer the purposes and test the hypothesis in this survey are basically the responses of secondary school administrators to the survey as to what alternatives were given in the form of the questionnaire sent to all Cook County suburban high school district superintendents. (see Appendix A)

D. The Sample

Since this study is concerned with high school students, the survey and report are limited to the investigation of secondary school districts.

There are 27 secondary school districts and one unit district in suburban Cook County. A total enrollment of 159,976 students are enrolled in the 1973-74 school year in 68 high school buildings.

E. Alternative Education Survey Procedures

The Department of Research of the Educational Service Region of Cook County submitted a survey to all Cook County suburban high school districts requesting detailed information on the number of students and teachers involved in alternative education programs and on the type of programs offered. (see Appendix A for the actual survey.)

The purpose of the survey was to provide information on existing programs to educational administrators, teachers and the general public and to analyze and evaluate alternative programs now available for dropouts, expelled students, pregnant students, truants and those academically unmotivated or deficient.

With the completed compilation and interpretation, the Educational Service Region of Cook County will subsequently be able to, as a long term goal, direct students and parents to available alternative education programs that will fit individual needs. The information also enables schools without alternative programs, to make their current programs more relevant to student and community needs and provide the impetus to establish new options.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF THE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM SURVEY

According to the survey results, fourteen out of twenty-eight suburban high school districts stated that an alternative education program was being offered in their district for students removed from the regular school rolls. Of the thirteen districts offering alternative education programs, six school districts provided a brief description of their alternative program goals, objectives and philosophy. These descriptions are given in Chapter IV.

A. Pregnant Students

Fourteen school districts offer an alternative education program for pregnant students which include after-school courses, home tutoring, evening school, independent study, contractual learning, correspondence courses such as those available through the University of Nebraska and, to some extent, continuation in regular high school program.

Of the fourteen districts with programs for pregnant students, eleven districts provide home tutoring, one district provides independent study and contracts, two arrange for correspondence courses, four provide night school programs, and three school districts provide a wide number of options and alternatives including many of those mentioned above.

Though many of the school districts do attempt to provide special programs for pregnant students, there is the continuing problem of inclusion

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or exclusion from the regular classroom environment. One school district responded that "they have never had a pregnant girl who wanted to continue school." The question of keeping pregnant students in regular classrooms is often less important that the provision and opportunities provided by a school district for continuing education.

Many of the responses to the survey included "home bound" programs with tutoring or independent study or contracts with occasional conferences at school with work being completed at home.

B. Programs Implemented During School Day

Among the 28 school districts responding, fourteen offer alternative programs during the regular school day and 21 districts provide evening programs or access to evening programs.

The various day programs, with several different orientations, go under the name of:

XP Experimental Program

Extension School

Afternoon School

Opportunity Adjustment Program

S.T.E.P. - Student Therapeutic Educational Program

Action Learning Center

A.L.P. Alternative Learning Program

Center for Self Directed Learning.

In addition to the above mentioned day programs, the following Table provides a listing of career-oriented programs available in the

school districts, the number of districts having each of the programs, the number of students enrolled in the career training programs and the number of teachers involved.

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TABLE I

CAREER ORIENTED PROGRAMS OFFERED IN

REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Title of Program	Acronym	School District Responses			
		Yes	No	Number of Students	Number of Teachers
Diversified Occupations	D.O.	21	6	1,487	39
Distributive Education	D.E.	25	3	1,342	44
Office Occupations	O.O.	26	1	1,052	48
Home Economics Related	H.E.R.O.	20	7	980	31
Cooperative Work Training	C.W.T.	21	6	2,563	62
Work Experiences Career Ed.	WECEP	9	18	252	8
Health Education Related	H.E.P.	6	19	137	6
Neighborhood Youth Corp	N.Y.C.	5	21	213	-
Cooperative Work Agreement	C.W.A.	3	20	350	-
Other		11	13	641	19

Among the additional career-oriented programs specified under "Other" on the survey are: work and training programs for students in the special education program such as the sheltered workshops, food service training, industrial and related occupations, pre-vocational and occupational training, cosmetology, and applied biological careers.

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C. Evening Alternative Programs

In the evening high school program for credit offered by thirteen of the school districts, 914 male students and 676 female students are enrolled, with 158 teachers and twelve administrators involved. Also as a part of the evening program, 21 school districts provide for standard high school diploma programs for regular high school dropouts.

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CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PHILOSOPHY

Evanston Township High School District 202 provides an "Afternoon School" as an alternate arrangement of the school day for students under 18 years of age whose record of unexcused absence from classes during the regular school day has placed the student in a precarious position in the school. The alternate arrangement is intended to relieve the student of some of the constraints of the regular school schedule, "foster a new and positive attitude toward school attendance through new classroom success and, if successful, return the student to the regular school day."

Evanston also provides an "Extension School" as an additional alternative. The Extension School is a short-term education program for those students who have been defined by teachers and administrators as socially maladjusted. The goal is one of rehabilitation and is based upon their philosophy that "a true learning experience is enhanced by explicit, concrete limits and expectations, especially for the student who is suffering from social and personal conflict and confusion." The Extension School is a self-contained unit where students selected for the program meet daily for four hours of concentrated instruction. The learning tasks are to develop appropriate social behavior with an emphasis on attitudes conducive to successful school functioning and to develop basic skills. The curriculum emphasizes individualized programmed materials geared to individual needs and abilities. The student is

8207-11 (9/76)

eligible for the program for a number of reasons, including: underachievement, excessive class truancy, withdrawn or aggressive behavior or disruptive behavior.

Additionally, Evanston provides an Evening School for students 16 years of age or older to complete their high school education.

District 211 in the Palatine, Hoffman Estates and Schaumburg area also has an evening high school diploma program for students sixteen or older who have either been withdrawn or expelled from the school district. The program is called the "Continuing Education" program. Also eligible for the program are students in the regular day school program who need additional course work to meet graduation requirements and to non-resident students who want to complete high school but have limited educational opportunities in their own area of residence. The classroom phase of the evening program is designed for drop-outs, adults and in-school students who have failed their subjects. Vocational and educational counseling services are also available, however the Vocational Seminar classes are open only to out of school students.

Leyden High School District 212 in the Franklin Park and Northlake areas of Cook County, also has a "continuing education" program for residents of the school district who have dropped out of school before graduation. The Leyden program includes counseling services for review of existing academic work and to set up procedures for high school graduation. In the Leyden program, students of the evening program must meet the same requirements for graduation than those in the regular day school. This program does charge tuition. Though most of the Leyden programs are for adults, they are also available to a very limited extent

to high school students who have been recommended by counselors and approved by the administrator. For the students who "are unable to tolerate a full day of school, but function effectively when at work," exceptions are made whereby they are allowed to attend school for a half day, work in the afternoon and attend continuing education classes in the evening. Also seniors who have insufficient credits for graduation may take up to 6 1/2 units of credit in the alternative program

School District 214 in the Mount Prospect, Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove Village, Rolling Meadows and Wheeling suburbs, provides an exceptional alternative program called the "Young Adult Program," an evening high school for students whose names have been removed from the regular school rolls because they have withdrawn, dropped out, or perhaps have been encouraged to leave school. The goal of the program is "to provide the kinds of personnel and learning activities to enable otherwise disenchanted students to obtain a high school diploma." Curriculum is arranged to meet the needs of the students who have not succeeded in the day school program

District 214 additionally provides alternative programs for pregnant students and for "experience-oriented" students. The former, called "Preparation for Parenthood" program, is course work and counseling for pregnant high school students. Course topics include prenatal health care, nutrition, labor and delivery, the needs of the newborn, financial and legal problems and contraception. The district provides several options for the pregnant student. These include continuation in school, home education and tutoring, school continuation along with the Parenthood

course, study at home and enrollment in the Parenthood program, courses in the Young Adult Program evenings, or simply enrollment in the Parenthood program alone.

In addition, District 214 provides a program for "experience-oriented youth" called the EMP-SCC Action Program for students who have been unable to participate in a normal high school program for a variety of reasons, including: "severe behavioral disorder based upon emotional problems observable through manifestation such as high degree of absenteeism, academic failure and confrontation with peers and authority figures." The major goal of the program is provision of a socialization process designed to help students return to the mainstream of the normal high school.

School District 218 in Worth, Blue Island, Oak Lawn, Alsip and Crestwood suburban areas provides programs for the students who are removed from the regular school rolls because of gross disobedience and misconduct. These students are filtered through the district's Special Education Department. Their goal is to "guarantee all youngsters in the district the opportunity of utilizing their maximum potential." The district's educational program for pregnant students helps them "to continue their education without interruption." District 218 also provides a homebound and tutorial program for expelled students, high school credit courses and adult basic education programs.

District 219 in Skokie in Niles Township works with MONACEP, the Maine-Oakton-Niles Adult and Continuing Education program which is a high school program open to all persons 16 years of age or older who are residents of Maine and Niles Twonships in Cook County. MONACEP provides

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an evening high school, G.E.D. high school equivalency preparation courses and testing, and home study courses. The evening high school is available for adults and for some regular high school students with the approval of a counselor. The objective of the program is to enable a student to earn a high school diploma and/or develop educationally to their own limits. Classes are ungraded, small and as individually oriented as possible. Graduation requirements are the same as the regualr day program.

The home study courses at MONACEP offer students the opportunity to study at their own rate with a teacher/supervisor as gu'de and test administrator. Study materials and course work are taken from the University of Nebraska Extension Division.

District 219 has proposed an additional alternative to the MONACEP program and to Special Education programs for severely handicapped or disturbed students. The proposed program would be optional for students who have expressed interest in it and "who have a dislike for the traditional school environment, a belief in themselves that they can learn effectively in a different environment, the desire and ability to work at their own pace and have some control over program decisions and schedules, a desire for experience in the real world and the ability to be responsible for themselves and their decisions." The Special Education program would be a work training oriented special program for severely handicapped or disturbed students.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the Cook County suburban schools, programs for students who are potential dropouts are still rather limited except in a few districts. There is still much dependence on extension and correspondence courses, home study and not yet enough on alternative day and night school programs.

Programs that have been successful, such as many of those described in Chapter IV are the special programs within the school such as alternative learning centers for small groups of students, open campus accomodating working students, vocational and career oriented work-study programs, extensive work study programs with meaningful work to motivate students, and which build self esteem and prepare students for the world of work have been most successful.

It is necessary that a sufficient variety of learning environments be available to meet the needs of all students. It is advantageous both for the schools and the students when schools provide the opportunity for each student to pursue education in an environment and style conducive to individual needs.

Although the results of the alternative education survey made among the suburban secondary schools of Cook County do sound promising, far more is needed to provide alternatives and options beyond the traditional school setting.

Further legislation mandating alternative education programs and the funding of these programs could be extremely helpful to address

the problem of education for all students, particularly those who withdraw or drop out or for those who are expelled from school. The major concern is the motivation of students who may never have been motivated by school before.

Alternative educational programs are specifically important for not only those who want options to traditional educational environments, but for those with behavior, attendance, achievement and motivation problems, as well as for married students with additional responsibilities. The most successful schools with the greatest holding power are those who provide flexible programs to provide special programs to fit the specific needs of all their students.

April 10, 1974

SURVEY OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Name of District: _____

Superintendent: _____
(signature)

Date: _____

	YES	NO
1. Does your school district offer an alternative education program for students removed from the regular school rolls?	___	___
A. If YES, what type of alternative program is offered? (Include separately, a brief description of your goals, objectives, philosophy etc. This may be a report presented to your Board of Education, or other printed material relevant to the program).		
2. Does your school district offer an alternative education program for pregnant girls?	YES	NO
	___	___
A. If YES (same as 1A above)		
3. Does your school district offer any alternative program during the regular school day?	YES	NO
	___	___

4. By what name do you identify your evening alternative education program(s)?

_____

5. By what name do you identify your day alternative education program(s)?

_____

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6. Do you offer an evening high school program for credit to individuals from ages 16 - 18? YES ___ NO ___

   A. If YES,

      1. Number of boys in evening high school _____

      2. Number of girls in evening high school _____

      3. Number of teachers in evening high school _____

      4. Number of administrators in evening high school _____

7. Can a regular high school drop-out receive a standard district diploma through an evening program? YES ___ NO ___

   Other? _____

   _____

8. Why type of alternative program(s) are available for: (Please provide a prepared statement, if available)

   A. Expelled students _____

   _____

   B. Pregnant girls _____

   _____

9. Why type of credit per semester is granted for "On the Job" Work Experience in your evening alternative education program?

   ___ 1/4 credit

   ___ 1/2 credit

   ___ 1 credit

   A. Other: (please specify)

   _____

   _____

10. Would your school district support legislation lowering the General Educational Development (G.E.D.) testing age requirement from 19 years of age to 18 years of age. YES ___ NO ___

11. Which of the following programs are offered in your regular high school curriculum?

	YES	NO	NUMBER STUDENTS	NUMBER TEACHERS
A. Diversified Occupations (D.O.)				
B. Distributive Education (D.E.)				
C. Office Occupations (O.O.)				
D. Home Economics Related (H.E.R.O.)				
E. Cooperative Work Training (C.W.T.)				
F. Work Experiences Career Ed. (W.E.C.E.P.)				
G. Health Education Related (H.E.P.)				
H. Neighborhood Youth Corp (N.Y.C.)				
I. Cooperative Work Agreement (C.W.A.)				
J. Other (please specify)				

_____

_____

_____

Please return the completed survey by May 1 to:

Glenn R. Matter, Assistant Superintendent
Director of Vocational and Adult Education Programs
Educational Service Region of Cook County
33 West Grand Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60610